

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow</b> 2338035 <b>DCU</b> 17116325 <b>Charles</b> 25113386
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	Tracking the Flow of Military Assets and Logistics for OSINT: The Case of the Syrian Civil War

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

<b>Reviewer 1 Initial Grade</b> <i>For internal use only</i>	<b>Reviewer 2 Initial Grade</b> <i>For internal use only</i>	<b>Late Submission Penalty</b> <i>no penalty</i>
<b>Word Count Penalty</b> (1 UofG grade point per 500 words below/above the min/max word limit +/- 10%)		
<b>Word Count:</b> 20,971 <b>Suggested Penalty:</b> no penalty		

### JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

<b>Final Agreed Mark.</b> (Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).
<b>Before Penalty:</b> A5 [18] <b>After Penalty:</b> A5 [18]

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
<b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>	
This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Very Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Very Good
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Excellent
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Excellent
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Very Good
<b>B. Use of Source Material</b>	
This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• <i>Evidence of reading and review of published literature</i>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Very Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Excellent
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
<b>C. Academic Style</b>	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Excellent
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Excellent
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Excellent
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Not required

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• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes
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### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### **Reviewer 1**

The thesis "Tracking the Flow of Military Assets and Logistics for OSINT: The Case of the Syrian Civil War" is an exceptional piece of research on the OSINT technique, efficiently and capacity. The author proved to be able to address many open issues inside the OSINT debate such as its pros and cons. In this respect, the thesis is structured appropriately giving all the theoretical background needed in the first part and then a very substantive and detailed case study. What strikes the reader is the level and quality of evidence and details given and reported (and carefully considered in the thesis). The granularity of the information reported is quite impressive and it is a major contribution to the literature, which is not always so detailed. In this respect, this is an achievement per se, and I would like to underline it appropriately as far as it is unusual to find it. The analysis is critically conceived and all the arguments display an usual level of awareness of the problems and open issues. Then, the arguments are presented in a very sharp and clear way and the reader can follow the details without losing the "big picture" the author is presenting. In addition, the author has proved to know the main tools in OSINT and he/she discusses them with the right amount of detail to be expected in a scientific context. The language is definitely appropriate. The thesis is very carefully written also from this point of view. The number of items (quite rightly) referenced are substantive and they are able to ground the conclusions and the main arguments and thesis presented in the thesis.

#### **Reviewer 2**

This is a very impressive dissertation, which delves into a timely topic of ongoing technologically enabled changes of open source intelligence. The dissertation demonstrates you deeply understand the new development around OSINT and connected emerging phenomenon of private intelligence analysts (nicely called 'intelligence minutemen' in the dissertation).

The dissertation also impresses by extremely knowledgeable case studies from Syrian Civil War. These case studies go far beyond shallow description of well-known events, which are not uncommon among master level dissertations. Quite to the contrary you manage to describe micro-development on the battleground and shows how private OSINT analysts followed this development.

Also notable is how pleasant it is to read the dissertation. The text is neatly written and well-structured into logically connected paragraphs.

However, the dissertation cannot be only praised. Whereas it impresses with the depth of knowledge of the new possibilities, the dissertation a bit disappoint in terms of analysis. There, thesis aim probably causes the trouble.

The aim 'to foster a better understanding among decision-makers regarding the potential of Open-Source Intelligence' is a bit problematic one. I don't think writing (however insightful and informative) overview of ongoing technological changes is the most proper aim for the dissertation. Certainly, the aim is not truly analytical. Consequently there is no clear research question and the dissertation describes more than analyses.

This might be because the dissertation likely overestimates the originality of the topic. It is rather well known among experts that technologies like satellite imagery, once available only to world's most powerful government, are now available to the public. In fact, researchers have been using open source analysis for quite some time (check for instance Grace Liu's work on proliferation). I think this dissertation would be fantastic, if it was taken one step further. Readers of this

### **IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet**

dissertation will certainly like to know what the development means. What difference it makes? It is impressive that twitter users can pinpoint things like Russia's air force order of battle in Syria. However, governments could do the same for some time. What difference than makes that twitter users now?

Having said that, I still think this is very good dissertation. Perhaps, you could develop it further in a PhD thesis.